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TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: RRT ERBIL: KRG ELECTIONS PROCEDURES FOR VOTING BY  
SECURITY PERSONNEL RAISE CONCERNS FOR ELECTION DAY

Classified By: Acting Political Counselor Peter Vrooman for reasons 1.4  
(b) and (d).

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Summary  
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¶1. (C) Summary: The Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) is confident that the voting process during the upcoming Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) elections will be conducted with integrity. However, the special circumstances surrounding voting by security personnel point to possible areas of concern. Contacts have told RRT Erbil that they are concerned that security personnel, who will participate in Special Needs Voting administered by IHEC on July 23, will seek to commit vote fraud. They also note that KRG security personnel are under extremely tight party discipline to vote as directed by their superior officers. End Summary.

¶2. (C) In a recent meeting with RRTOff, IHEC Commissioner Al-Husseini explained the measures IHEC is taking to prevent tampering with the election results. Before the voting begins, for example, election monitors will be able to check to see that the ballot boxes are empty. IHEC will be advising observers to arrive at polling stations in time to verify this, as well as to stay to the very end until all the votes have been counted. When the voting ends, votes will be counted at each of the 1,149 polling stations throughout the Kurdistan Region. Just like process during the January 2009 provincial elections, the tally sheets from each polling station will be collected in Erbil and sent to Baghdad via secure transport. In Baghdad, the votes will be tabulated at the IHEC Data Entry Center (DEC) before provision results can be announced. The ballot boxes themselves will remain in each province, to be held at the Governorate Electoral Office (GEO) warehouses in each KRG province and guarded by KRG security forces.

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Special Needs Voting  
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¶3. (C) IHEC is working to ensure voting by individuals who belong to the uniformed services that will be providing security on July 25: the Peshmerga, the Asayish, and the police. Al-Hussaini said that these individuals will vote two days earlier, on July 23, and that they will cast their votes in polling stations designated for special needs voting. These locations are expected to be their barracks or workplaces because it would be inconvenient for them to go to other designated polling places due to their schedules. During the discussion with Commissioner Al-Hussaini and in a subsequent meeting at the UNAMI office in Erbil attended by representatives from several embassies, there did not appear to be a well-developed plan in place to provide the degree of coverage by international observers for special needs voting similar to the degree of coverage envisioned for July 25. (Note: In a separate conversation, KRG Interior Minister

Sinjari told RRTOff that security personnel will cast their ballots at about 300 locations. End Note.)

14. (C) In order to prevent security personnel from being able to vote twice, on the 23rd and again on the 25th, IHEC has created a separate voting list for security personnel, and is attempting to scrub these names from the list of the general voting population. IHEC continues to work to finalize the voter lists. Specifically, Al-Hussaini mentioned problems such as trouble matching Kurdish with Arabic fonts, incorrect ration card numbers, and other erroneous information that prevent IHEC from matching the two lists. IHEC is seeking solutions to these issues. For now, Al-Hussaini said that the primary measure that will prevent double-voting will be the ink stains on voters' fingers.

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Comment  
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15. (C) RRT Erbil has been informed by former high ranking officers of the PUK Peshmerga and Asayish that security personnel in Sulaimaniyah have been warned that they will lose their jobs if they do not fully support the PUK. A number of them have already been fired for not obeying this command. Having votes cast in barracks or workplaces, without international observers present, could add to the possibility of voter intimidation. Moreover, relying on checking fingers for ink two days later as the sole measure to prevent possible double voting by people under extraordinary pressure to vote as directed by the two major parties presents a possibility of double voting. RRT Erbil and the Embassy are flagging this issue for IHEC contacts and

urging that more attention be paid to these issues in order maximize confidence in the integrity of the election. End Comment.  
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